Dealers Who Add Actual Photos and Prices to New Car Listings Online See Significant Increase in Activity, According to AutoTrader.com Site Research

AutoTrader.com's New Front-Line Listings Amplify Success of Proper Merchandising

ATLANTA, May 9, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Research released today by AutoTrader.com shows that dealers who merchandise their new car inventory online by adding actual photos of each new car and real prices garner significantly more traffic to their online vehicle detail pages (VDPs) and generate more interaction with their listings than dealers who do not include this information. While many dealers use stock photos for new car inventory online, listings with only stock photos didn't perform much better than listings with no photo at all, which highlighted the importance of taking actual photos of each new car.

(Logo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110425/CL88097LOGO)

To assess the effect of proper merchandising, AutoTrader.com looked at two key metrics: the percentage of shoppers that visited a VDP after seeing a listing in the initial search results (referred to as "VDP views") and the percentage of shoppers that interacted further with the listings by clicking through photos, printing pages, clicking on a dealer's website link, viewing a map to the dealership or other shopper interactions.

In order to compare performance, AutoTrader.com analyzed inventory listed in both the standard new-car listings format and the recently released Front-Line Listings format. For new car inventory posted using the standard ad format, adding actual photos and prices increased VDP views approximately 140% and increased shopper interaction by 110%. For new car inventory posted using the new Front-Line Listings format, dealers who added actual photos and prices increased VDP views more than 450% and increased shopper interaction over 235%.

"We want our dealers to get the most out of the products and services they utilize, and these numbers paint a clear picture of how two elements—actual photos and prices—can have a dramatic effect on how well their listings perform," said AutoTrader.com Vice President of Sales Alan Smith. "Merchandising takes time, but this research proves that the return on investment is worth it."

Front-Line Listings Amplify New Car Merchandising Success; Real Dealer Sees Results

With the recently released Front-Line Listings, which aggregates a dealer's new car inventory into a rich multimedia listing on the search results page, the effects of good merchandising are amplified.

Stingray Chevrolet, a Tampa Bay area dealer, knows first-hand the difference that using Front-Line Listings and having properly merchandised cars has had on their dealership. Supported by their consistent use of actual photos and prices on most of their new car inventory online, Stingray Chevrolet experienced great performance of their listings throughout 2010.

But their listings performance was amplified when the dealership participated in the Front-Line Listings test in the fourth quarter of 2010: just 10 days into testing, VDP views on their new car inventory increased significantly, and with one full month on the new solution, VDP views increased 241% compared to their previous monthly average, resulting in one of their best sales months in 2010. The success continued in January, with their VDP views increasing 287% over their previous monthly average.

"Month-over-month and year-over-year, the amount of activity for our new-car listings on AutoTrader.com has gone up, and that increase has turned into more traffic on our

showroom floor," said Andrew Conrad, New Car Director at Stingray Chevrolet. "Even though sales typically slow down at the end of the year, Front-Line Listings gave our new car inventory the visibility needed to attract more buyers in December, and we ended up having one of the best sales months of the year for new cars. That trend continued into January and February with even more record sales and March is shaping up to be yet another great month for us."

Smith of AutoTrader.com added: "For years, we've worked to help dealers better understand the importance of properly merchandising their inventory online, and we've evolved our products to enable them to continually reach more in-market shoppers. We're gratified that the most recent research reinforces both our message and methodology, but we're even more enthused that the metrics we're seeing on the site are reflected in our dealers' real world successes."

About AutoTrader.com

Atlanta-based AutoTrader.com, created in 1997, is the Internet's ultimate automotive marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates in a single location millions of new cars, used cars and certified pre-owned cars from thousands of auto dealers and private sellers and is a leading online resource for auto dealers, individuals and manufacturers to advertise and market their vehicles to in-market shoppers. The company also provides a robust suite of software tools for dealers and manufacturers to help them manage and market their vehicle inventory and display advertising on the Internet. AutoTrader.com continues to grow key business metrics, including revenue, profitability and site traffic. Today, AutoTrader.com attracts more than 15 million unique monthly visitors who utilize the site to review descriptions, photos and videos of vehicles for sale; research and compare vehicles; review pricing and specials; and read auto-related content like buying and selling tips and editorial coverage of major auto shows and automotive trends. AutoTrader.com operates two other auto marketing brands, AutoTraderClassics.com and AutoTraderLatino.com. AutoTrader.com also owns used vehicle management software company vAuto, Kelley Blue Book (Kbb.com) and HomeNet Automotive, a leading provider of online inventory management and merchandising solutions for the automotive retail industry. AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. Providence Equity Partners is a 25 percent owner of the company and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

SOURCE AutoTrader.com

For further information: Julie Shipp, +1-404-568-7914 (ph), +1-404-558-7837 (cell), julie.shipp@autotrader.com

---

https://press.autotrader.com/news-releases?item=66868